

CHILD STUDY

THE CHILD'S LEISURE

The Way of Growth

By JOSEPH LEE

And What about the Movies?

By LOUISE CONNOLLY



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The Way of Growth

What is a child's leisure and what part does it play in his life?

By Joseph Lee

IT IS difficult to define children's leisure. Certainly their play time is not their leisure time, for growth is the business of childhood, and play is the chief instrument of growth. As between play and schooling the discipline in play is the more severe because the things it teaches are the harder and the more heroic. It is in play especially that character is born.

Perhaps children's leisure is that part of their school time in which they are not learning anything—the time often occupied by "busy work," so called because it is while doing it that the children are not really busy. Or perhaps it is that part of their play which they themselves call fooling. But even that has significance for growth, just as the comic, even the grotesque has a place in art. People who must be always serious are not quite human nor ever quite grown up. So even fooling is the children's business.

And recreation is a grown-up word. It means return, revisiting the sources of our life. But the child's visit to these sources is his first. He is discovering, taking on his life, not returning to it. Our part is to further and direct the process.

What is a baby's leisure and how ought he to employ it? When does time hang heavy on his hands? Perhaps it is when he is kept waiting for a meal, and the use he makes of such intervals sufficiently expresses his opinion. And what is his recreation as distinguished from his serious work?

As for work, it is said that a child learns in his first three years one-half (or is it three-quarters?) of all that he will ever know. Among the little things to which he gives attention during that period are the existence of time and space and the location of things and events

therein, the fact that he can move his hands—that in this strange and fascinating outside world he also is a cause—and that things also move themselves and have a way of dropping if you let them go.

He learns to creep and stand and walk—an incredible feat of balancing that only he and his cousins have yet mastered; to pick up very little things (contrary to what the orthodox say he ought to do); to wield and examine and manipulate—an accomplishment to which human intelligence largely owes its rise. He learns approximately where his head is, so as to avoid it when he flourishes his spoon. He discovers that some things are better to eat than some others—that carpet, for instance, is especially good, but that you have to hide behind a chair or something to get away with it.

He learns to smile—to recognize that there are other minds possessed of sympathy and understanding, and that one can signal to them or communicate by spoken sound. He learns to play upon and enhance the give-and-take relation with his mother, to hide and come back, oppose and yield, provoke and ask forgiveness, to quarrel and make up. He runs the whole gamut of human intercourse. He learns that his mother can be managed, that she is or isn't a good sport, that she does or does not draw the line.

Suppose he were asked about his use of leisure, I imagine he would say: "How do you mean, leisure? Excuse me, but I am rather busy."

A little later, between three and six, the child perhaps is playing doll, giving Elizabeth her bath, putting her to bed and dressing her, taking especial pains about her manners. Perhaps you

class such pursuits as merely recreation and think it well to interrupt with something "real"—having the child "learn something," such as how to spell *mother*, or the comparative hygienic value of wool and cotton. What in that case is it that you interrupt? What was the child learning? Why a doll? Why didn't she start with wool and cotton or with spelling? These are valuable lessons at some stage of education—why not now?

Well, it was not hygiene or spelling that her soul was seeking. Nature had not whispered to her, "Wool". It was another message, the voice of motherhood, the most authoritative she will ever hear, saying: "Open to me: I am you." What was it that she learned in listening to it and giving herself up to its direction, acting out the drama it suggested? What she learned cannot be said in prose. It was not a catalogue of facts.

Must we interrupt this sacrament in order to talk of wool and cotton and hygiene, or improve the hour with a spelling lesson? These things are very useful, very necessary, and their time will come. But must we seize the precious years assigned by nature to the growth of the imagination in order to accomplish what would take perhaps a week if undertaken at the proper time? The hour of the concrete will come—of wool and spelling and hygiene. And even then, who will learn and apply these lessons most effectively, the woman who as a child was taken up and possessed by mother love, or the one by whom nature's moment for such experience was lost? Now is the time not for the means and accidents but for the thing itself.

Personally I believe that reading at this age is not only a waste of the greatest educational opportunity of life but a positive evil. Mother is not, as we teach, a set of letters. It is religion, a dimension of the soul. These ideas are our angels, the central and animating core of all our life, not to be juggled with or blurred by the introduction of the extraneous and accidental.

Or it may have been horse or soldier that the child was playing, or flying like a bird, blowing like the wind, or being the grass or leaves, or just looking at the stars and wondering or listening to the voices of the trees—the voice of nature saying: "I am you: be still and listen."

Such is the phenomenon of growth, the budding in the child of a spirit greater than himself, which whispers to him, "Do thus with all thy soul," and

which through his obedience moulds him to its purposes.

It is the same through childhood—in the Big Injun period, beginning at about the age of six, in which through the play of experimentation and of contests the soldier and the scientist are born; in the age of loyalty, of team play, of friendship and the gang, the budding period of the citizen. A boy playing football is not merely putting all there is in him into the game. He is putting in more than there is in him, more power than he himself possesses. He is not playing the game, the game is playing him. He is taken up into the sweep and orbit of a power mightier than he.

Most typical and most inclusive is the creative spirit, the insistent desire of every man to give visible evidence of the spirit that is in him, to write his hieroglyphic upon the outer world. It is through such expression that he becomes himself, converts the vital impulse—a formless thing, a longing, an uneasiness, a pain—into actuality. It is true he will never get it said, but with each sincere attempt he possesses a little more of what the message was and is more nearly fashioned to its utterance. The thing he made stands up and answers him and renders him himself.

This is the way of growth—the only way.

And as he builds, there is a necessity of building better, and with advance there comes a magic quality. The thing he made speaks in a voice he has never heard, that has in it something magical. There is born what amateurs call beauty, but the word gets shopworn; the artist will not use it. What he is looking for cannot be said in words. Something outside has spoken to something inside of him, but he has no word for either. It is communion, a mystical experience, the unknown without speaking to the unknown within. Of all things it is not self-expression. The thing in him which acted he did not possess. It is only in surrender to it that he is born.

Growth is from within.

It is true, and most true, that there is teaching also, and teaching is a necessary part. There must be teaching not only in school but on the playground. There always has been since the cat first wiggled her tail to make her kittens chase it and boxed their ears for misbehavior, or the mother bird first showed her fledglings how to fly—and long before.

The great majority of games are not inherited,

and it is an emancipation to the child and not an inhibition to show him a good game. The same is true of stories, songs and plays. Play is largely a social product from the first. A child's first playmate is his mother and she is necessary to him in this relation. Even his physical life comes to him in that first experience of give and take upon his mother's lap—as is grimly indicated in the horrible death rate in infant asylums, where such experience is not provided. Man is the heir of all the ages by social transmission as well as by physical inheritance, as the child's insistent tendencies toward questioning and imitation sufficiently establish.

It is only a little distance that the individual spirit can travel by itself along the path that the genius of humanity prescribes. Children should be taught not only songs and games and nursery rhymes and prisoner's base and hockey and baseball. They should not only be brought up as friends of dogs and horses, of birds and animals, lovers of trees and brooks and flowers. They should be taught sketching and dancing and the violin. They should become companions of Homer and Praxiteles, of Bach and Beethoven, of Emerson and Shakespeare, of Copernicus and Galileo and the stars. They inherit as legiti-

mately from these as from the nomad of the steppes or from the cave man.

Especially in the play of boys and girls together—in the whole management of marriage and love-making—this old world has learned a little that is not transmitted by direct inheritance. To withhold this knowledge from the rising generation is to deprive them of their birth-right. The resulting evil is not principally in positive catastrophe but in the failure of fruition—a failure especially in the case of girls to turn the budding power of life, of which sex is but one manifestation, into beautiful and creative channels—in allowing the ground to be burnt over by a too constant and premature excitement, a hardening and sterilizing process, inimical to poetry and romance, to depth and resource and stability. The mothers must combine, adopt reasonable restrictions as to hours and conditions and make provision for a more positive and creative life. For this is especially the period of the growth of the impulse upon which the attainment of expressive life and also in great measure the development of a lasting and effective morality depend.

And What about the Movies?

By Louise Connolly

THE questions created by the development of the motion picture as the ubiquitous entertainment are not wholly new. They are multiplied and intensified, but they existed in the days when we, too, "were young".

Julia, a little girl of these other days, learned to read when she was three years old. Everything in the house was open to her. Her father's home was full of good literature—for adults—but some of it would now be adjudged unsuitable for children. She swallowed it all, but assimilated only what her mind could metabolize. At sixty, when childhood's memories are vivid, she could not recall anything pernicious in the bibliography of her childhood, though some passages had led to vague wonder.

She rode out one day on the hay wagon to the haying field. "That man from the mountains that's mowing in the south field," she confided to

her mother, "talks just like Shakespeare. Uncle Bill asked him, 'Is that youngster your son?' and he said, 'He is if his mother doesn't lie.' They talk like that in King Lear."

"I suppose," said her mother serenely, "that the same old jokes have been made over and over again by country folk since the time of Shakespeare. It's the same way with songs."

Julia had an inquiring mind, but she had also a fixed habit of learning the adult vocabulary by the context rather than even a personal and oral dictionary. Modern foreign language teachers have endorsed the method.

There was one taboo on the home literature. "If I were you I wouldn't read Byron until I was grown up," said her father. He had found Julia at twelve perched on the top of a step-ladder and ostensibly dusting a shelf of battered-looking calf-bound poets. "All right, sir," said she. On the

morning after her sixteenth birthday party, looking about for more worlds to conquer, she spied Byron. "Now I'm grown up," she reflected, and mounting a wooden stool, she plunged into the perusal of Childe Harold. Within five minutes she closed the book with emphasis. "The idea of father's thinking I'd *want* to read the dirty old book," said she.

How did she know it was "dirty"? Through her ears. At seven, sent on an errand to the kitchen, she had heard a lewd song. She would, even then, have escaped its meaning if it had not been for the smirking adjuration of a visiting maid—"Shet up, nigger. Yo ain't no right to sing liken dat in front a ignant chile." Next summer, when she and a little cousin went again to the haying and rode home on Uncle Bill's wagon, they were treated like queens, but they heard much that an "ignant chile" shouldn't know. "Oh," said they to each other, "lots of colored people ack that way."

At thirteen, when Julia's mother gently opened the door to knowledge of what she deemed life's holy secrets, the free-masonry of a young ladies' private school had forestalled her.

Unless they actually participated, however, in vulgar and debauching practices, Julia's generation experienced appeals to the intellect rather than to the emotions. Today it is not through the statement of facts in words that "life" presents itself to the innocent. They see. Today Julia's granddaughter goes to the movies. And the movies present to the eye almost all that is, and much of what can be imagined. A passing shrug in an otherwise harmless scene on the screen will show, much more graphically than any statement can convey, vulgarity, unseemliness, or, prematurely for the growing child, passion.

Furthermore, the movies offer a mixed program, with something of especial interest to everybody. It is this that disturbs the careful parent. What is the use of taking one's child to see Cinderella sandwiched between a vulgar comedy and an amorous tragedy, or even juxtaposed by a noble drama with meanings unveiled by verbal obscurities?

In the first place, most parents permit the problem to confront them too soon. No child should be taken to see a motion picture while the actual life about him is still a kaleidoscope. During this time he does not need such rapid consecutiveness

of crises whose very elements are yet unknown, and whose implications of motive are obscure.

Much is to be gained by waiting—every day makes the solution of the movie problem easier. For many earnest people are working toward the achievement of higher standards in movies. Eager reformers, full of hate for sin and sinners, are fulminating and so keeping the subject to the front. Short-sighted reformers are demanding that all adults submit to the artistic and moral judgment of a three-thousand-dollar gentleman with a rabbit's nose for what's naughty. Exhibitors are seeking programs that will placate the women's clubs without decreasing the box-office returns.

Producers are hiring, and heeding, their own national dictator, lest they be confronted with the necessity of satisfying or bribing forty-eight state "boards". Congressional committees are patiently listening to arguments on the establishment of another Federal Bureau, with power to forbid the production or display, in a lumber camp or a Broadway theatre, of anything unsuited to a young ladies' seminary.

The National Board of Review is assiduously doing constructive work in passing or eliminating, reviewing and classifying practically all of the national product, so that anyone who takes the trouble may know, before witnessing, the qualities of any play. The Amateur Cinema League is also making a constructive effort. Like the Little Theatre, they are hoping to inspire and train to higher standards producers, actors, and spectators everywhere.

We need not be discouraged. Alone we can do a little, but with co-operation we can do much. We know that, strive as we may, we cannot even give our children appreciably better manners than those of our neighbors. There is no national board of good manners, worse luck!

When Hiram Powers' statue, the Greek Slave, was first brought to this country, a conference of Cincinnati clergymen was called to decide whether it would injure the city's morals if shown. They decided in its favor. And now we have hordes of school children careering through the art galleries of the country, getting a pound of inspiration for every ounce of contamination.

So it will be in the future with the movies. For nothing is on the up grade more surely than the motion picture.

Child Study Activities

Detroit Conference Reveals Status of Parental Education

PARENTS everywhere are eager for the help which cooperative child study can give them. This was the predominating feeling at the conference of the National Council of Parental Education, held in Detroit October 25-28, 1926, and the discussion constantly recurred to the question, "How can we meet this demand?"

The National Council of Parental Education was organized a year ago last October, to serve as a means of exchanging information, formulating common problems, surveying the needs for parental education and surveying the activities being carried on throughout the country. The four-day meeting in Detroit this year was attended by sixty representatives of different organizations, who were guests of the Merrill-Palmer School.

Among those who presented reports and were active in the discussions were Dr. Lois Hayden Meek, Mrs. Sidonie M. Gruenberg, Mrs. May Pardee Youtz, Dr. B. S. Richards, Dr. Ruth Andrus, Miss Gertrude Laws, Miss Edna Noble White, Mrs. Cecile Pilpel and Mrs. Robbins Gilman.

In the course of the discussions several tendencies in the field of parental education became evident. One of these is the rapid growth of interest in the subject. At the time the National Council was organized eight agencies were represented. During the year that has elapsed since then many of the older agencies have expanded their programs, several new organizations have been effected, and others were found to have been doing related work in a small way.

Another outstanding feature is the wide range of agencies that are engaged in parental education. At one extreme there are the juvenile court and the child guidance clinic. Here parental edu-

cation of a very intense and highly specialized kind is going forward. The individual parent who comes to them for help has suddenly come to the realization that one does not become automatically equipped for the serious business of parenthood by the simple process of becoming a parent. At the other extreme is the university, with its graduate course in genetic psychology or research project on habit formation.

A compilation of information gathered during the past year through interviews and correspondence shows nine distinct types of agencies that are doing work directly related to the education of parents. These include centers of child welfare research, usually connected with state colleges or universities; city agencies; state welfare agencies; nursery schools; religious groups; organizations designed primarily for health work; and "private organizations," which range from a city parental council to two

national organizations—the American Association of University Women and the Child Study Association of America.

It has been found that the largest number of questions which parents are asking are concerned with problems of discipline. Nervousness and sex problems rank next. It is the mission of parental education to help parents find answers to their questions. At the same time it is necessary to warn both parents and those who are consumed with a zeal to help, that most of the questions do not permit of a direct answer or a simple recipe that can be taken home and put to work, like a recipe for making a new dessert.

In the last analysis, parental education becomes a question, not so much of imparting information as of modifying parental attitudes.

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Education and Leisure

ALL modern schemes of education take into consideration the child's need of recreation and leisure. It is well recognized today that what the child does outside of the classroom is at least as important as what he does in school hours. The learning process is not confined to the classroom. Children are learning all the time, through their play as well as through their more formal school work, and many of the most vivid and telling lessons are taught on the gymnasium floor and the baseball field. Courage and endurance, cooperation and fair play, loyalty and selfless striving for a common cause—these are some of the character-building by-products of the team, the club and the gang.

But just as the child needs "organized" play, so also he needs leisure time, wholly or partly unsupervised, in which to plan his own work or play, and to carry out his plans in his own way. He may need inspiration and suggestions from his parents and teachers to help him get from his leisure the greatest enjoyment and permanent profit. But he needs, too, freedom to create and to do—to develop initiative and independence.

Nor need we be distressed when he seems to "waste" time in activities that we think are silly and profitless. He will develop his own sense of values, colored though these undoubtedly will be by our attitudes of approval or disapproval, and by the use we ourselves make of our leisure. Perhaps he chooses, on a fine sunny afternoon, to stay indoors and tinker with his radio. The loss of one afternoon's "fresh air" and outdoor exercise is of less importance than the interest and effort that go into this hobby, and the feeling of accomplishment he gets from making it work.

The child who never knows what to do if left to his own devices for an hour or an afternoon, the

boy who has not always a fascinating and absorbing plan to carry out when opportunity offers, may grow into one of the all too numerous adults who make such sad misuse of their leisure hours. The more fully we can develop the child's own resources, the more surely we are protecting that child against middle-aged boredom and over-dependence upon outside stimulations.

Parents' Conference at Baltimore

THE growing interest of parents in child study is evidenced by the significant number of parent conferences that are being held in various sections of the country. The most recent was a conference "Concerning Parents," held in Baltimore, Md., November 30th and December 1st, under the joint auspices of the Baltimore District of the Child Study Association and the Child Study Association of America. More than a thousand persons—parents, educators, social workers and representatives of child study groups in many parts of the country—attended the sessions.

On the first day of the conference the morning session was devoted to the mental hygiene aspects, and the afternoon to the educational aspects of child guidance. Speakers at the morning session were Dr. Esther Loring Richards, Dr. Leslie B. Hohman and Dr. Frankwood E. Williams, and at the afternoon session, Dr. Emmet M. Sipple, Dr. Patty S. Hill, Dr. Florence E. Bamberger, and Mrs. Sidonie M. Gruenberg.

A dinner in the Grand Ballroom of the Hotel Belvedere concluded the day's sessions. Mrs. Howard S. Gans, President of the Child Study Association of America, welcomed the members of the conference and their guests, and addresses were made by Dr. William A. White, Dr. Buford Johnson and Dr. Hughes Mearns.

An especially interesting feature was the demonstration of child study groups presented on the second day of the conference. The widespread interest in the study group as an instrument of parental education was shown by the large number of conference visitors who took advantage of this opportunity to see study groups in action.

This Month's Contributors

Joseph Lee is President of the Playground and Recreation Association of America and author of "Play in Education."

Louise Connolly is Educational Director of the Newark Public Library.

The Child's Use of Leisure

(Based on the Minutes of a Child Study Group)

Sources:

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IT should be a part of our aim in the training of children to keep open for them all the lines of communication with ideas and feelings that may come to them. But we need not expect that ideas and feelings will come through passive receptivity. The child should be stimulated to go forth and meet new experiences. In planning the child's use of leisure, we should cultivate that attitude which seeks satisfaction in doing, in overcoming difficulties, in solving problems. We should encourage the child's impulse to do and to make, to adventure and explore.

Mrs. Allen points out that parents often make the mistake of trying to offer to their children all of the varied social pleasures and other cultural "opportunities" that they can possibly afford. With the complexities of modern social living this effort is likely to result in too great nerve strain for the growing organism. Youth is eager for novel experiences, but it is neither necessary nor wise that all of its desires be gratified. There is no reason why a boy or girl should see every good play, all the available works of art, every remarkable performance of any sort. A few suitable samples, a few notable experiences of each kind will suffice. Intellectual advantage does not require a full round of concerts, lectures, charities and club activities. Nor should children be prematurely socialized by a steady succession of dancing parties, theatre parties, house parties, etc. Such social life is essentially adult life, since for its proper use and understanding it needs all the accumulated knowledge that comes with maturity. Socially, physically and intellectually, in our cities especially, both boys and girls are over-stimulated—they overdo.

We must learn, and help our children learn, to balance values, and so to choose the greater among admissible pleasures. We must establish, too,

broad lines of total elimination, not only to avoid what is harmful, but to eliminate those pleasures which are unsuited to a particular age, and those that are wasteful. The choice of pleasures must be guided not only by whether or not they are harmful but by the positive value they may have for the child.

Young people enjoy excitement, but frequent excitement overtaxes vitality. In denying children injurious excitements the parent need not fear that he is depriving them of rightful enjoyment, provided that he substitutes saner pleasures.

In discussing the place of arts in the life of the child, Mrs. Gruenberg points out the changed concept in our approach to the study of music, drawing, and plastic art. We have learned to think of the arts in terms of enlarging the child's life, not in terms of training him to perform for the approval or admiration of others. The paint brush, the clay, the piano or violin is placed before the child with the expectation, not that he may distinguish himself and honor the family name, but rather that he may acquire further means of expression and add to his enjoyment of life through acquaintance with the emotional resources of the various arts. Both for the purpose of cultivating appreciation, and for the purpose of discovering the child's capacity, parents should provide as many points of contact with art expression as possible. Such contact need not be in the form of formal "lessons" but may be incorporated in all of the child's activities. Visits to museums and other opportunities are valuable in themselves, but it must be remembered that the influences which make the greatest impression on the child's tastes are in his immediate surroundings—his clothes, his furniture, his books, and his opportunities to express himself through his activities.

Mrs. Gruenberg also stresses the need of every child for good books, intelligently selected, through which he may find not only entertainment and inspiration, but also a form of vicarious experience with people and customs beyond his own immediate environment.

Another activity recommended for the child's leisure is the care of pets. Through them the child may acquire a knowledge of many facts of

life. But more important than any intellectual gain is the development of a sense of responsibility which comes through the daily care of an animal. For learning about animals, trips to museums and zoological gardens are invaluable. But for developing responsibility and devotion, a child should have his own pet to care for.

Parents should realize, too, the advantage which the boy or girl derives from interest in a hobby. Whether the chosen hobbies be lasting ones or passing fancies that will last but a short time, they supply motives for application, effort and sacrifice, and carry with them stimulation and recreation that are nowhere else to be found. The child should be encouraged to pursue the hobby of his choice as intensively as time and opportunity permit. The hobby that means doing something is more valuable than the hobby that means having something, but both may have a place in the child's life.

Mrs. Fisher points out that social life—recreation-in-common—is a definite need of all human beings, and that the child will obtain it in some form or other, whether it is provided or not. It is the business of the home, therefore, to give wholesome color and impetus to the child's social life. If children are trained not to depend on cumbrous social machinery for their fun, but to create it themselves, spontaneously, out of the material available on any chance occasion, they will find their satisfaction in wholesome amusements, and the meretricious and false will have much less appeal to them. Thus, too, initiative and resourcefulness in social matters can be cultivated. Young people need adult help and encouragement in planning their parties, but they should be taught to take upon themselves much of the responsibility and actual carrying out of the plans, and to act as hosts. Frequent impromptu parties, which require little planning and effort, develop children's ingenuity and retain spontaneity.

Swift urges the boy's need of travel and adventure. Unless the racial need for self-assertion, for aggressive action, is provided with legitimate outlets it is likely to express itself in destructive and anti-social activities. A fundamental problem, therefore, in training boys, consists in furnishing adventures without encouraging reversion to savage practices. Adventures need not be spectacular to meet the requirements. Boys will tramp through the woods until ready to drop from exhaustion, and enjoy every minute. Scouting is the cue for countless racial reminiscences. Boys

require action, with freedom to initiate and discover.

Pechstein & McGregor declare that training in the worthy use of leisure is at once the obligation and the opportunity of the schools. The craving for pleasure is inborn in every individual. Pleasurable activity is needed to bring about physical renewal as well as a general integration of the personality. So strong is the pressure for personal enjoyment that, if socially desirable forms of pleasure are not available, lower types will be seized upon to the physical and mental detriment of individual well-being. With the constant improvement of machinery, man has less physical activity and more hours of leisure. How these leisure hours with their accumulation of unexpended energy shall be occupied, is a problem of tremendous social importance, and the school must accept the obligation, here as elsewhere, for training to meet this need.

In the junior high school period the individual is seeking wider social contacts, and pleasures should be offered freely. Commercialized amusements, good, bad and indifferent, flaunt themselves in the eyes of youth, and by constant suggestion tend to develop not only habits of foolish expenditure, but insistent cravings for excitement as well. To counteract these tendencies the school must provide desirable, pleasureable activities.

Since it is foreign to the nature of pleasure to submit to dictation, the school should offer many types of amusements, but refrain from prescription. The range of natural and wholesome amusements should be broad enough to attract children of varying tastes and temperaments. Not only athletic clubs, but hand-work clubs, literary clubs, science, music and arts, and various hobby clubs may be developed as activities within the school. Through organized class and school parties the school can set a simple standard of good manners, if it considers its social functions in the light of training opportunities.

Discussion

The question was asked: "How is it possible to provide in the average city home enough space and facilities for the care of pets, for children's parties, and other activities that are recommended as desirable for children?" It was suggested that such activities may be reduced to greatest simplicity without hampering the children's enjoyment of them. With limited facilities it is necessary to give greater thought to working out ways and means, but even at some sacrifice of personal

(Continued on page 14)

BOOK REVIEWS

Children With Special Abilities

Gifted Children: Their Nature and Nurture. By Leta S. Hollingworth, Ph.D. The Macmillan Company, 1926. 365 pages. \$2.00.

UNTIL about ten years ago, the literature dealing with children deviating from the normal concerned itself entirely with those deviating in a downward direction, and attention was focused upon the incompetent, the delinquent, the feeble-minded, crippled or insane. The "bright" child was regarded as able to look out for himself, and hence was neglected in favor of his backward brother, not only in connection with the expenditure of public funds, but also by parents and the teachers in the schools.

In this book Dr. Hollingworth renders valuable service both to parents and the nation at large in pointing out that superior intelligence or genius presents as many problems as does sub-normal intelligence, and that it is the business of society to devise means for locating highly endowed children, and to determine "how best to bring their talents to fruition." This task is particularly important in this country where the doctrine that all men are born equal has held sway for so long, and has been reflected so clearly in the general educational policy.

Dr. Hollingworth treats the problem of the superior child in a most interesting and illuminating way. Much scientific evidence is presented in so clear a manner that it is easily comprehended. The author overturns many popular superstitions about genius. She shows that gifted children undoubtedly require special treatment, and that there are many advantages in segregated or "opportunity" classes in elementary and high schools. She points out, too, that whereas it was formerly supposed that all college students were of superior intelligence, there is now good ground for believing that in the last two decades the intellectual caliber of the students has declined markedly, probably because of the immense influx to the colleges and universities. Hence these institutions also have to face the problem of how to deal with students of widely varying intellectual qualifications.

It is, perhaps, surprising that parents of gifted children generally rate their offspring too low, probably because in most cases other members of the family are also "superior" people, who set up too high a standard as an average.

The problem of the gifted child is one not only of the school, but also of the home, and this book should be welcomed by parents as well as teachers, social workers, and socially-minded philanthropists.

E. M. O.

The Tools of Play

Permanent Play Materials for Young Children. By Charlotte G. Garrison. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926. 122 pages.

THIS is a little manual packed with an amazing amount of valuable material. It gives a clear, common-sense, non-technical statement of the principles which should guide us in the selection, use and care of play materials for young children, together with a detailed description of toys and tools for different uses, and directions as to where and how these may be obtained.

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FIFTEENTH SEASON

The Meaning of ADULT EDUCATION

by C. E. Lindeman

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Book Reviews

(Continued from page 11)

Although the suggestions are intended especially for the use of teachers in nursery school and primary grades, the material described is, for the most part, easily adaptable for home use, and frequent directions are given for "home-made" adaptations of toys and apparatus. The book is written in a style that is simple and readable, the material is admirably organized under chapter headings that are both suggestive and convenient. Chapters on "Toys to be Used for Manipulative Play Leading to Experiment," "Toys for Very Active Play," "Materials Which Encourage Scientific Experiment," will be as helpful to the lay mother as to the teacher in providing suitable play activities and outlets for the young child.

In an interesting introduction to the book, Professor Patty Smith Hill stresses the importance of proper play materials for the child's developing powers, and the relation of physical and mental health to creative employment in early life. "Little children can and will play with anything if worth-while things are not provided, but oftentimes this degenerates into unwholesome and unproductive play. While we recognize that productive work requires good materials and tools, we do not realize the waste that comes from poor equipment."

M. S. G.

Suggested Reading in Recent Magazines

"*The Lies That Children Tell.*" By Dr. Adolph E. Meyer (New York University). Scientific Monthly, December, 1926.

Discusses in detail four aspects of the problem: the causes of children's lies, the pseudo or apparent lie; the real lie; the treatment and prevention of lying.

Woman's Place Number, Survey Graphic, December, 1926.

Contains articles by Stuart Chase—"Wasting Women," pointing out the desperate effort to keep up with the Joneses; Helen Glenn Tyson—"Mothers Who Earn," discussing the industrial mother and the professional woman; Beatrice M. Hinkle—"Changing Marriage," dealing with the effect of the industrial revolution on the home and marriage, and the basis of success in the marriage relation; Frankwood E. Williams—"What are Parents For?"; and Ira S. Wile—"As Children See It."

"*The Disappearing Personal Touch in Colleges.*" By Clarence C. Little, President of the University of Michigan. Scribner's Magazine, November, 1926.

Discusses the attitude of the college or university towards its students and the dissatisfaction of students with the present method of discipline and instruction; the question of admitting to colleges those whose fitness is doubtful.

Sesqui-Centennial Awards Medal to the Child Study Association

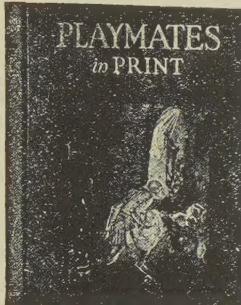
THE following is part of a letter received by the Child Study Association of America from the Executive Jury of Awards of the Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition—a jury of one hundred members:

"This is to inform you that the International Jury of Awards of the Sesqui-Centennial Exposition has awarded the Child Study Association of America, Inc., a silver medal for the merit of their educational work."

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The Child's Use of Leisure

(Continued from page 9)

convenience these activities should be arranged for. Small pets require little space. Outdoor parties can be arranged if indoor play space is lacking.

How to keep children busy and entertained during the long summer vacation in the suburbs was discussed. An instance was cited of a group of children who had been disturbing a whole neighborhood in a suburban section until someone offered them a disused chicken-house to play in. With a little adult suggestion and guidance, the whole summer's activity thereafter centered about converting it into a play-house—scrubbing and disinfecting walls and floors, sewing curtains, making rugs and furniture, and then planning and holding various parties in the play-house.

The difficulty of providing nature contacts for city children was discussed. It was suggested that day trips and picnics in the country can be easily and inexpensively arranged. Such trips should, especially when planned for older children, entail walking, cooking of meals, and participation in chores as well as in active play, rather than travel by automobile with ready-prepared sandwich lunches. On trips of this kind, children can be encouraged to explore the surrounding country and seek out unusual flowers, birds, etc.

The question was asked whether it is wise to urge music lessons upon a child who shows no interest in practicing. It was pointed out that various standardized tests are available for determining whether the child has unusual musical ability. If a child in whom the tests show a marked ability refuses to practice, an effort should be made to ascertain the reasons for his lack of interest. Possibly his time is already too crowded with routine requirements. A change in his schedule or a new approach to study may stimulate his interest. For the child who shows no special ability, music lessons without any practicing can be valuable to develop appreciation.

It was asked whether, in planning recreation and lessons for the city child, it is desirable to try to fill entirely his out-of-school hours. It was felt that the city child is likely to have his time over-routinized. Several afternoons of the week should be left free for his own planning. The slight loss of "fresh air" which might result from his preference for occasional indoor play will be compensated for by the development of independence and creativity to be gained from this freedom to plan for himself.

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